"Bringing together Somali civil society in the quest for peace"
Civil society meeting
Entebbe, 11-13 March 2008

Introduction

From 11-13 March 2008, over 150 leaders of Somali civil society gathered at the Imperial Beach Resort Hotel in Entebbe, Uganda. The group included: Somali NGOs, business leaders, professional associations, women's groups, religious leaders, academics, the media, and traditional leaders. Almost half of the group are members of the Somali expatriate community, who travelled from as far afield as Australia, Canada and Scandinavia. It has been an unprecedented gathering of such a wide-ranging and influential group of civil society.

The prospect of recovery and peace-building in Somalia rests in large part on civil society, which can be a catalyst for social, political and economic change. The purpose of this meeting was two-fold: first, to foster a more collective voice among the diverse sectors and groups of Somali civil society, both those living within Somalia and those living outside; and second, to begin to build consensus among this group on how the Somali civil society can most effectively and constructively contribute to peace-building in Somalia.

Discussion was intense and animated over the three days of meetings, both in plenary session, and in the various working groups on, for instance, the role of women, the business community, and of the diaspora in peace-building. The meeting was also attended by selected representatives of the international community who had the opportunity to interact with the wide range of Somali participants.

Despite the intensive nature of the meeting, with side sessions continuing late into the evenings, the atmosphere throughout was cordial and constructive, generating a spirit of hope and empowerment in the midst of the challenges faced by the Somali people. And all sides recognized that civil society represents a valuable resource in the quest for peace.

Summary of proceedings

DAY ONE

The meeting opened with prayers from the Koran.

Abdirahman Raghe, Interpeace, spoke on behalf of the organising committee to express his profound gratitude to the delegates for their commitment in participating in the quest for a meaningful peace in Somalia. He noted with appreciation the initiatives proposed by the Special Representative of the Secretary General for Somalia to deal with the prolonged crisis in Somalia. The meeting provides a platform for Somali civil society to explore these and other ways to lead Somalia back to peace and normality, without any hidden agendas or predefined outcomes "It is your meeting, your agenda, your country."

A representative of the **Special Representative of the Secretary General for Somalia**, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, presented a speech on his behalf, saying that Somali civil society organisations are the backbone of Somali nation and the voice of the voiceless such as women, children and elderly. He highlighted the positive contribution that Somali civil society organisations can make for the revival of Somalia and pledged his unwavering support for the Somali civil society.

*Jabril Ibrahim Abdull*e, **Director of the Center for Research and Dialogue**, made a brief presentation about the socio-economic status of Somalia and the current grim reality facing the Somali people, concluding "it is time to unify our efforts to make peace a reality in Somalia."

Somali poets, including Abdi Dhuux and Sugaal Abdulle, addressed the meeting at different times.

The role of civil society in peace building *(plenary session)*
Historical overview of the role of civil society since 1925 (*Yusuf Baadiyow*)
Civil society organisations were not encouraged by the colonial power, Italy; in 1943, the Somalia Youth League emerged; the 1950s were a time of increasing national consciousness, and various clubs for sports, students, women, were formed; after the military takeover in 1969, only were state-sponsored organisations were allowed (rather than independent); from 1985, a small number of organizations emerged; during UNOSOM 1993-5, there was a proliferation of organizations, with many "briefcase NGOs", and only a few developed into solid organizations. These included the first umbrella organisations, such as COGWO and then PHRN.

Relationship of civil society with local governance structures (*Abdirahman Shuke*)
Civil society has an important role in local governance through mobilising community ownership and enhancing the responsiveness and accountability of local government to community needs.

Review of the challenges to civic space, violations of human rights (*Maryam Owreeye*)

Overview of human rights abuses; harassment of both Somali and international NGOs; need for research into transitional justice, truth and reconciliation; the implementation of service delivery (in line with the principles of "do no harm"); and how to apply the principles of good governance. Call for the emergence of a political culture of good governance, inclusiveness, devolution of power, and systems for accountability (including respect for human rights)

Examples were given of the potential for constructive engagement and where a significant role can be played that is, nevertheless, not in competition with the government. One is the National Civic Forum, which provides a neutral space, mediation skills, and the potential to bridge gaps.

The business sector and peace building (*Mohamed Jirda Hussein*)
Business sector perspective on the obstacles of insecurity and lawlessness to business; and the potential benefits of effective governance for business development. The business community works across all borders and collaborate with all groups; it bears the cost of insecurity through damage to investments, has to pay for security, and faces problems in movement and access, etc. As a result, the business community wants to see a government formed and law and order restored, which will lead to improved conditions for business with open roads, port, airports. Through 17 years without a government there has not been any improvement for the business sector.

Local peace processes *(panel discussion)*
What makes local peace processes work (Interpeace)
Examples were given from studies carried out by Somali research teams of successful local peace processes. All were initiated, funded, and hosted locally, increasing community ownership. Respected leadership drawing on the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms provided legitimacy and moral authority. The dialogues were genuinely inclusive (of potential spoilers and neighbouring communities) and evolved as processes (not an event). Shared commitment and public pressure for resolution were critical – community mobilisation by women, youth and the business sector and constructive engagement of the media enhanced the likelihood of success. Sometimes exceptionally dedicated individuals played critical roles and support of political leaders from the concerned communities helped resolution. All peace accords reached in local

reconciliation processes involve compromise by all parties. Some of the challenges for implementation are unfinished business (*diya* not paid) and lack of enforcement (impunity for violations of the accord). The key features of successful local reconciliation processes can be summarised as:

- the coalition of traditional and religious leaders, civil society, and business actors who are engaged, drawing on all their resources for effective resolution;
- resolution of the conflict brings immediate and universal benefits for the wider community (e.g. improvements in security, trade, shared access to communal resources such as grazing and water, and an enabling environment for local governance and development)

Factors that **undermine processes** or prevent successful outcomes include: unmet interests of possible spoilers and unfinished business; inadequate dissemination of the agreement (especially in rural areas); impunity for breaches of the agreement and lack of enforcement mechanisms; ineffective local authority to assist with enforcement; high level of external [including international] influence on the peace process; external factors (concurrent conflicts, changes to the political landscape, natural disasters, worsening poverty, khat addiction, prevalence of armed youth, etc.).

Experience of traditional leaders - and innovations Ugaas Abdixakin Ugaas Maax
The way in which the series of external national level conferences since 1991 were conducted undermined the system and the authority of the traditional leaders (as reflected in the proliferation of traditional leaders from 57 in 1991 to 400 today). Their role was also undermined by the civil war (and the proliferation of armed groups). Since the civil war, at local level, the traditional leaders in Hiran region, for example, have used different means to reconcile communities in conflict including using buffer zones to separate militia, using their own resources to fund peace processes, and drawing on the capacity of women to mobilise the community for peace. They have minimised use of *diya* payment because of the problems of renewed cycles of revenge killings when payments are not completed. In order to play a preventive role and reduce the expansion of conflicts, the traditional leaders: (i) Initiated weekly meetings to share information and make rapid interventions where possible; (ii) Applied sharia or applied *diya* to be paid by the immediate relatives of the perpetrator

When cases are not clear, they draw on the authority of the religious leaders, whereby parties in conflict give testimony under oath. Also, they ask them if the case has been addressed and can be dismissed in order to avoid continuing proliferation of grievances. The conclusion is that sharia law is the only deterrent.

In Hiran, the Ugaasyo' peace caravan in 2007 was a very effective tool for peace dissemination. The joint mission by the group of Ugaasyo visited rural villages and settlements to discuss problems within the communities and how these could be resolved peacefully.

The role of civil society (Civil Society in Action)
The traditional conflict resolution systems have been undermined by the civil war, even in the rural areas. Also, the nature of the violent confrontations between some groups is

beyond the scope of the traditional systems or the civic peace activists. Traditional leaders have a primary role in resolving local conflicts and local groups, such as community-based organisations and local NGOs, can also play a constructive role. One of the challenges can be when local groups have funds with the risk that the community and their traditional leaders lose ownership of the reconciliation process. One of the positive roles that local groups can play is in enhancing awareness and community mobilisation for peace – one example is the peace march led by Hadrawi. The recommendation is that the civic movement focuses on strengthening peace awareness and minimises it financial role. At the national level, the simplest conclusion is that external intervention is the source of failure and that any party not happy with the outcome becomes a spoiler.

Comments:
There are four types of conflict resolution: inevitable; maturity; forced (from within); imposed (from without).
Some of the problems with national level processes (e.g. Eldoret/ Mbagathi) have been: externally driven; lack of preparation; no selection criteria; no honest broker of those in conflict; no role for civil society (limited to warlords/ politicians); lack of engagement with the business community; subjugation of minority groups; role of neighbouring states not addressed; fragmentation within the international actors not addressed; no visible benefits "I'm still milking my she-camel and eating wild fruits – what good did the minister I elected do for me?"; increase conflict; "winner takes all".
The meeting under the tree is not sufficient – need a guarantor.

Building viable security structures *(panel discussion)*
Implications of different types of resolution of conflicts (e.g. victor's peace, imposed peace, win-win) and contrast with the durable collapse/ stalemate in the Somali context
Failure of attempts to impose a security structure that is disconnected from a political agreement
Lessons learned from previous international engagement in security sector
  (i)   any engagement should be based on a political, not military, rationale and any support should be subordinated to and in support of a political strategy
  (ii)   emphasis on security sector governance (for example, not limited to training of and support for the police but to include policy and legislative frameworks, parliamentary oversight, etc)
  (iii)   the approach needs to be decentralised and based on assessment of local needs and capacities
  (iv)   this requires coordinated and coherent support within a framework for international support

Women's Participation in Peace and Reconciliation *(panel and working group)*
Women shared examples of the work being done in different parts of southern Somalia and identified opportunities for enhanced collaboration. In a follow-up working group, they focussed on specific ways in which women can enhance their contribution to reconciliation and peace.

The primary roles women can play in mobilising society for peace and reconciliation are:
- trust-building among women as the first step, including mapping what different women's groups are engaged in;
- advocacy and mobilization through civic education and the media;
- building credibility within their communities

Building confidence and trust enable healing and are key ingredients. The women identified the following ways in which they can engage with different sets of actors to build trust:
- Among political and religious leaders – identifying individuals from all sides with whom they can strengthen relationships; passing positive messages and being available for shuttle mediation; lobbying all sides for peaceful ways forward;
- Between citizens and peacekeepers - awareness raising of positive contributions of the peacekeepers for the community; strengthening links between citizens, CSOs and the peacekeepers;
- Between politicians and the community - meeting with politicians; forming lobby groups to engage all sides; and engaging the media to convey positive messages;
- Among communities in conflict - sensitization and mobilization on the need for and benefits of peaceful coexistence

The women identified the following ways in which they can translate their commitment into strategic actions for sustainable peace:
- networking (horizontally and vertically), joint planning, and working together as volunteers and in collaboration with key stakeholders;
- fund-raising as individuals and organizations;
- building alliances with decision-making bodies and key institutions;
- targeting strategic hot spots to create peace zones;
- forming a task force for follow-up and implementation of actions;
- continuing to advocate for peace

The women aim to meet again for a follow-up meeting in April 2008.

The role of the business community (*panel discussion*)
Somalia experienced a horrific civil war that seriously damaged the fabric of the Somali people. The Somali Nation has had two sets of leadership, that of the public sector (which has failed to deliver) and that of the private sector. The dynamic, innovative and vibrant private sector has sustained the hope of the Somali people. Despite all the challenges, the Somali business community has achieved substantial developments for the people of Somalia and made significant and continuous contributions to peacebuilding in Somalia.

The role of the business community in peacebuilding includes:
- Fostering peace through enterprise and job creation
- Reconstructing the fabric of society and social healing through business networking
- Sponsoring peace initiatives and national dialogues
- Responding to national crises include humanitarian emergencies (man-made and natural), for example through providing blood banks, hospital funds, and logistical support for medical crews

- Demobilising militia through employment (for example, the telecommunications sector alone employs over 2000 militia)
- Solidarity with civil society's peace agenda
- Sponsoring Sports for peace and social integration

The challenges faced by the private sector include:
- Insecurity in the country, particularly the presence of Ethiopian forces and the destruction of infrastructure and development
- Absence of law and order
- Gap in leadership and capacity between the public and private sectors
- Image crises for the private sector due to unscrupulous business elements
- Printing of fake currency
- Lack of direct engagement of the international community with the private sector

Opportunities and commitment of the business community to peace
- Facilitation and sponsorship of any peace initiatives that brings lasting peace for Somalia
- Fast-tracking the reconstruction and development of Somalia
- Provision of the capacity and skills required in the public sector

Finally, the business community expressed its commitment to create a peace fund to support local peace initiatives.

Local governance and peacebuilding *(panel discussion)*
Local councils have an extensive mandate but have neither the capacity nor the resources to fulfil this mandate. The multiple challenges to decentralization at local level include:
- existing legal frameworks are not applied;
- decentralisation of revenue to local level;
- lack of confidence in the central government to redistribute revenue to local level;
- lack of commitment of political leadership to decentralised governance;

The peacebuilding perspective on local governance is that it increases community ownership and enhances responsiveness to community needs and accountability. It is a long process to establish local government and the challenges include:
- the need to harmonize legal frameworks;
- lack awareness of stakeholders in their role in local governance;

Historically, the only governance experience that the Somali people had at the time of independence was a highly centralized system of governance inherited as a legacy of the colonial rule. After independence, the highly centralized system of the former Somali Republic replaced the colonial system but did not give more emphasize to local governance, on the contrary the state became more and more centralized with the state powers and decision making powers concentrated in the capital while the periphery had little influence on what was happening in the management of the public affairs. Some argue that since most of the Somali people lived in the periphery, this led to the majority of the population disowning the Somali state.

In the post-conflict period, there seems to be a deliberate attempt by Somalis to rectify this centralized governance system by putting much more emphasis on decentralised local governance structures as a key feature in post-conflict state building. For example, the Addis Agreement in 1993 emphasised local governance structures with the formation of district councils. The Arta process did likewise, with an added component of civil society involvement. The Transitional Federal Charter negotiated in the Mbagathi reconciliation conference also prescribes a decentralized system based on federalism. In Somaliland, a decentralized system of governance is a key element of the draft charter of 1993 and the present Somaliland constitution of 2001. The local council elections in 2002 were a milestone in the decentralization process in Somaliland. Decentralisation is also enshrined in the Puntland constitution and to date two thirds of councils have been established through the council selection process.

Strengthening local governance is proposed as a remedy to the old central system of old government because: it fosters local ownership of government; increase participation in local government affairs; increases the potential for responsiveness to community needs through targeted service delivery; and enhances potential for accountability.

The roles of civil society include supporting the formation of local governance structures by ensuring an all-inclusive process and in lobbying for public demands for local government institutions. Civil society organizations and training institutions can support the training of local government. Civil society can also raise awareness in the community about local governance issues and the need for people's involvement; encourage participation in people's forums and involvement in policy development and budget process as stakeholders in the process. Examples were given of active engagement by civil society in all of these areas (including the formation of district councils in Bay and Bakool regions and capacity building and training in Puntland).

Since local government does not have the capacity to deliver services, there is a role for the local business community to engage in joint public-private initiatives for social service delivery.

The role of the expatriate Somali community *(panel discussion)*
The preferred term is "the expatriate Somali community" rather than the diaspora (meaning "no home" in the Koran), which is seen as disempowering and an obstacle to engagement at a time when they want to be more involved and connected. While they have a visible role in economic support and business, there are other opportunities.
1. Because they are physically outside the country, they can <u>bridge gaps</u>, for example:
   - mediate between different groups, and help to address concerns of external actors;
   - improve awareness of ways to merge modern democratic, Islamic, and Somali values;
   - provide support for independent institutions, which need capable people and those who understand how external systems operate;
2. Because many expatriate Somalis have had access to education and professional experience, there are opportunities to:

- draw on the pool of expertise and knowledge, and transfer experience of democratic values;
- invest in the future leadership and foster the next generation;

In addition, since many media outlets were established by expatriate Somalis, they also have a responsibility to build an independent media, without clan bias, that can make a contribution to the quest for peace in Somalia.

Challenges include:
- Heavy demands on professional members of the expatriate Somali community in terms of financial resources and time (given demands in their professional lives)
- Identifying the right people in terms of integrity, capability, and willingness/ commitment;

It is also important to sensitise the expatriate Somali community on the current realities on the ground and opportunities for constructive engagement.

One of the key outcomes of the session was a commitment to explore further ways in which the expatriate Somali community and the civil society on the ground can synergise their activities.

Evening address by His Excellency, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda

His Excellency was accompanied by the Ugandan Ambassador Extraordinary Plenipotentiary for Somalia, Professor Sam Tulya-Muhika, the Ugandan Special Envoy to Somalia, Ngoma Ngime, and a prominent member of the Somali community in Uganda, Khadija Gurxan.

The president covered many aspects of the Somali context, and identified underdevelopment as a key factor. He also highlighted the destructive role of opportunists who exploit the problems in Somalia. The president gave his full support for the meeting and efforts towards peaceful resolution of the crisis in Somalia.

His Excellency, President Museveni of Uganda, consults Mohamed Sheikh Osman (Jaware) on the Somali language (above) – having been introduced by Jabril Ibrahim, director of CRD, and addressing the evening plenary session (right)

DAY TWO

Presentation of the EU + Norway Country Strategy on Somalia *(Mila Font, EC)*

A presentation was made by the EC on the EU and Norway Country Strategy Paper, covering the following:

- Content of the Country Strategy Paper
- Process for its preparation
- Comments made by NSAs from south-central Somalia (in Kampala in May 2007) and how they have been incorporated
- What's next? Drafting of sectoral strategies

(See separate attachment of the country strategy paper)

Strengthening the role of Non-State Actors (*Faisa Abdi Loyaan, Saferworld*)
Somali Non-State Actors (NSAs), such as women's groups, the business community, youth groups and tradition leaders, have stepped in to fill the vacuum created by the absence of national institutions, providing services, such as health and education, and filling roles that were traditionally the preserve of the state. Although the role that NSAs play in the delivery of social services in Somalia is widely acknowledged, historically NSAs have not been equally engaged in the formulation of policies for development, peace and security.

To address this, the European Commission is supporting a process to strengthen the role of Non-State Actors to engage in dialogue with national and international policy-makers. The programme is implemented by Saferworld and its Somali partner organisations; the Center for Research and Dialogue (CRD), the Puntland Development and Research Center (PDRC) and the Academy for Peace and Development (APD). The aim is to create structures for dialogue between Somali NSA, national authorities and international partners on issues relating to development, peace and security within the framework of Cotonou Agreement.

The three main steps of the NSA process are:
1. Development of representative and legitimate NSA structures
2. Awareness-raising on relevant policy processes – e.g. Cotonou Agreement
3. Enabling dialogue with different policy makers

Prior to the civil society dialogue meeting, a three day General Assembly of South Central Non-State Actors (SOSCENSA) took place at the same venue. This represented the culmination of a four-year process to establish the NSA structure in south-central Somalia. The meeting was attended by nearly all of the 52 members of the South-Central NSA General Assembly. The purpose was to debate and agree the structure and internal governance of SOSCENSA. Key outcomes included validation of the bye-laws of SOSCENSA, agreement on the composition of the Board of Directors, and election of the Chair and other office-bearers.

Harmonizing Somali peace and reconciliation processes *(plenary session)*
The panel presentations focussed on the three pillars of reconciliation, the transitional agenda, and the role of civil society.

Reconciliation (Ken Menkhaus)
Why have the Somalis had so much success with reconciliation and civil society initiatives at the local level and so much frustration and failure at the national level?

At the local level:
1. Peace processes have involved hybrid representation, blending coalitions of traditional leaders, civil society, business etc and using innovative techniques which draw on both traditional and modern systems, Islamic and western approaches. Local communities are taking a pragmatic "tool box" approach to broker and enforce peace accords.
2. Local reconciliation tends to be win-win (positive sum game), with immediate and universal benefits to all in the community -- for example, improved security, trade, and children can go to school.

In contrast, at the national level, the sources of frustration include the divisions and crisis currently apparent.
- Conflation of state building and peace building processes, where the peace talks are reduced to cutting the cake and the real of issues of peace and conflict are set aside;
- "Winner takes all", win-lose scenario (zero sum game), where one group gets everything and the others suffer. Negotiations are not intended to unify but are used as a tool to co-opt and divide the opposition in the quest for a victor's peace.
- Lack of ownership and a local voice, which is aggravated by talks being held outside the country;
- Interests of internal and external spoilers who threaten to undermine the process if it upsets their interests.

The implications of this track record of relative successes and failures are that, while civil society (anywhere) is not perfect and can be manipulated, Somali civil society is a vessel for enterprise, innovation and energy. This is reflected in the paradox that while Somalia is stuck politically, socially and economically it is moving fast forward. Civil society can help the political elite to think outside the box and envision opportunities. Civil society members are idealists in vision and realists through experience. There are two priorities in their roles:
1. To convince the political elite of the necessity of coexistence, power sharing, and possibilities of win-win outcomes;
2. For those who are connected with the international community, to do the same, by emphasising that "your security can not come at the expense at our security".

The transitional agenda and current approaches in the peace process (*Walid Musa*)
In any context, the transitional period is intended to stabilise the situation by working out permanent systems of governance and improve the overall security situation to allow these agreed new systems to come into free and fair exercise. In the Somali context, the transitional government has taken over from no body and with no systems in place (as

these had been destroyed). In this case, "stabilisation" meant establishment of: (i) systems of rule of law; (ii) justice; (iii) revenue management (which, after stabilisation, would enable provision of services and production); and (iv) constitution-making.

In any context, the transitional period will conclude when the people agree on a new system of governance. If there is stability, but no governance system, the transition continues. In the case of Somalia, if both security stabilisation and forging an agreed governance system have not been satisfactorily achieve, the transition will simply continue in one form or another risking collapse by transition; in such an environment, an autocratic force usually takes over and imposes a solution until another conflict erupts. The transitional leadership is required to deliver a situation where these two legacies are to be achieved, and not to impose their will on the establishment of either of the two elements.

The principles of the transition can be translated into the same set of agenda, whoever is in charge, and require the following:
1. Preliminary Reconciliation: with the view of generating an environment for a long term settlement to be reached through dialogue. Two essential results are required from this process at any level:
    o   commitment to disengage from conflict (*not* demobilisation at this stage);
    o   agreement on formal dialogue structures ad systems
2. Security: political dialogue addressing insecurity, targeting:
    - Structured disengagement with agreed monitoring mechanisms (that could include external support)
    - Temporary system (authority) to manage law enforcement; political entities assure compliance to the system by consent.
3. Constitutional process (as the next logical step from the charter) to address:
    o   systems of governance
    o   responsibilities and linkages
    o   mechanisms for coexistence with external entities
    o   systems to implement the constitution
    o   constitution evolving and protection mechanisms
    o   process for adoption
4. Constitution enactment arrangements: This involves:
    - The preparation and endorsement of the legal framework to enable the realisation of the new political dispensation (such as a multi-party environment);
    - The preparation and endorsement of the legal framework for the establishment, regulation and implementation of democratic competition (including electoral systems, census, voter organisation systems etc.);
    - Internal and (more important) external guarantees arrangements;
    - Holding of elections.

Approaches: The Somali political process and indeed the Somali people have 'charter fatigue'. The confidence of both internal and external players is very low for yet another reconciliation process that yields another charter as the basis for another transitional period with an uncertain leadership; there is a need to move on to a constitutional process

to act as the basis for negotiations and political process, however unusual this may seem. We must use the remaining transitional period to forge a process enabling this to happen if Somalia is to move ahead in a sustainable way towards peace.

Up to 2006, there were still questions about how the crisis in Somalia could be addressed but, now, all agree that the crisis cannot be resolved militarily. Some advocate an 'inclusive process', some a 'less inclusive process'. But NONE have a role for civil society. Until the transitional agenda is addressed, the transitional period will continue, in one form or another. The Somali leadership must unite behind one process, the sub-regional actors (who play a significant role in Somalia's internal affairs) must resolve to limit using Somalia as a scene for settling their own disputes, and the international community must elevate its engagement to such standards, assuring unity of purpose and constant, high level attention regulating the process, and using what is needed to adhere to its implementation.

Dialogue, security, and the way forward (*Dahir Mahamoud Gele*)
The issue of talks between the government and the opposition faces significant challenges, including internal divisions and the concerns that the violence may escalate further. As regards the presence of Ethiopian troops, there are two perspectives on this:

One position is that the Ethiopian forces were invited by the TFG and their presence is therefore legal. If they leave, there will be a power vacuum and insufficient TFG forces to provide security.
The other position is that the presence of Ethiopian troops affects the balance between the players (like taking performance-enhancing drugs in the Olympics) and negotiations are not possible in these circumstances. This is not an issue of conflict amongst Somalis but a country under occupation.

Civil society has a role in advising on which approach to take.

What is needed is a new formula that creates a phase-out for the Ethiopian forces through an international guarantor mechanism. A durable solution can only be developed if the Ethiopian forces leave Somalia: Somalis are ready to open dialogue without the presence of external forces in Somalia.

Learning from the role of civil society in the crisis in Kenya (*Deka Ibrahim*)
When the crisis in Kenya erupted on 30 December 2007 after the announcement of the election results, a group of reputable senior civic actors moved swiftly to intervene. This group, the Concerned Citizens for Peace, included General Subweiyo, General Opandi, Ambassador Kiplagat, George Mashiwa, and Deka Ibrahim, all acting in a voluntary capacity. The early warning had been the delay in the announcement of the election results. Although there had been similar delays in 1992 and 1997, the incumbent president, Moi, could enforce his decision. But after the democratic process of the elections in 2002, people expected a transparent, free and fair election process again in 2007. The announcement of the results on 30 December was a shock that inflamed the public throughout the country. Immediately the group, in their capacity as senior elders,

contacted each other and the key protagonists in a process that helped to create the conditions for mediation through:

1. fire-fighting through networking
2. working with the provincial commissioners and security forces at local level, the permanent secretaries of the ministries of Health and Education, and others to act as neutral bodies at local level to create safe zones
3. mobilising the peace networks
4. limiting the role of civil servants to ensure and protect their perceived neutrality (e.g. avoiding any political statements)
5. meeting key members of the donor community to tell them "we, the NGOs, are divided – do not aggravate the divisions by funding us"

Critical elements for successful engagement by civic actors include:
- engage people with credible reputations, integrity and far-sighted vision;
- think about how to engage the spoilers;
- accept failures;
- articulate and denounce divisions in civic institutions (e.g. within religious groups)
- understand the need for justice at political and national level but also at the personal level: the critical need is for social-centred justice

Reconciliation and local governance (*Dahir Mire Jabril*)
Dialogue is required at all levels of Somali society and with external actors on the way forward. There is a need to shift the paradigm for discussion. While there are successful Somali reconciliation processes at local level, including the Burao and Boroma conferences, and the Garowe conference that led to the establishment of Puntland, there has been a lack of progress at the national level (from Djibouti in May 1991, Addis 1993, and onwards). The issue is no longer clan-based fighting. If a national conference is promoted as the next step on the same lines as before, it will again lead to failure. How can we build the national level in the absence of local and regional structures?

It is critical that those competing for positions in local and regional governance structures are mandated by their local constituencies. In this way, with selection starting from the local level, the communities will elect those who will empower the executive level. Furthermore, local government structures that are established through reconciliation, consensus and participation have resilience. The engagement of civil society is essential if reconciliation initiatives and institution building are to bear fruit.

The roles of civil society in these processes (*Abdirahman Osman Raghe*)
Currently, the primary roles of civil society are:
- service delivery (health, education, etc) with crossovers into business
- community mobilization - to facilitate reconciliation and peacebuilding, emergence of local government, promoting human rights, including of women and youth
- fire fighting - through support for traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and the emergence of local authorities
- facilitating civic space - including freedom of the press, promoting human rights, and protecting humanitarian space

- networking to bridge gaps between - the local and international community, galvanising Somali business relations in the absence of formal institutions, etc

The formation of the Non State Actors structure from civil society networks, traditional leaders, and the business sector, is a significant step forward. Its different sectors are inclusive with respect to women, clan and geographical area, and it is emerging as an important structure for engagement with the international community (including donors).

The broader challenges and opportunities for civil society in the current context include:
1. Protect and expand civic space by working together through the evolving structures in order to support social and political development on behalf of their communities;
2. Representation – recognise the role of civil society in representing the interests of the wider community;
3. Collective action - work collectively to change the local environment of conflict towards peacebuilding, reconciliation, and reconstruction
4. Strategic development and linkages with the international community

Civil society is no longer operating in a vacuum and must adjust its role to work within the structures that will maintain its integrity.

Questions and comments:
- Why haven't the donors supported the TFG? Response: Support has been irregular to date but when there is a process towards sustainable peace, donor resources will flow.
- Civil society has a role in security arrangements.
- Institutions should be built as a legacy.
- Comments on the presence of Ethiopian troops in Somalia; Response: Ethiopia, Kenya, Djibouti, the Arab world, etc are all part of the global community and part of the conflict system in Somalia. National conflict impacts on your neighbours. For example in the conflict in Kenya, Mombasa port is not simply a Kenyan resource but a regional resource. If your neighbour is a spoiler, look at how you can meet their needs and negotiate. Another example is the experience of Kenyan Somalis, who for 30 years maintained the position "we will not negotiate while our area is under military occupation" but from 1992, Kenyan Somalis began to negotiate with the military for a different system of governance.

DAY THREE

Final plenary and Communiqué

A senior expatriate Somali, Osman Jama, spoke about the emotional impact of the meeting on him, inspiring and engaging him. He had never before seen such a group as this deliberating seriously for three days on these challenging issues. He said that he was part of the system that has failed the Somali people and it is important that we acknowledge our role in the crisis – only then can we move forward. Now the TFG is unable to deliver. But neither is the Alliance showing leadership. They need each other. Shall we continue to make the same mistakes or shall we move forward? He expressed appreciation to the EC for funding the meeting, to CRD, Saferworld and Interpeace for organising it, and all the participants for playing their parts.

A senior Somali figure, Abdirahman Shuke, evoked memories of one of the founders of the Somali Youth League, who died today. This is a bitter-sweet moment as he died at a time when what he had contributed to is going through another transformation. Losing such a big man as this puts pressure and responsibilities on all of us to carry the movement forward.

A senior traditional leader, Mohamed Ali Ugaas, told a parable relating to the fighting in southern Somalia. An elder is speaking to a man who beats his wife: "She is your wife, she is your family - my advice is not to beat her. She is your wife, she is you - my advice is not to beat her. She is your wife and my daughter, she belongs to you and to me – my advice is not to beat her. She is my daughter – don't beat her." Don't kill your country, don't kill our country, don't kill it – or, since we know who you are, we will go after you.

The draft communiqué was read out to the plenary. Two minor changes were addressed and the communiqué was unanimously approved.

In his closing speech, the director of CRD, Jabril Ibrahim Abdulle, related how he had been asked "what is the outcome of the meeting?" The outcome is the hope and empowerment generated at this meeting, which everyone present experiences, and which is of especial importance at this time in the Somali context. He was reminded of an occasion when he met an old nomad sitting under a tree in the central regions, who asked what he was doing. After he had explained, the old man said, "We nomads are also know about research, we are researchers. In the middle of the *jilaal* (dry season), to ask for rain is like accusing Allah of not delivering. But when the right moment comes, when we can see the signs and smell the scent, we conduct a prayer for rain." This meeting is the right moment, when we can scent the rain "*saxan-saxo roob*" – Somali peace.

> Hiraan Online "This meeting has propelled the reconciliation efforts forward"

COMMUNIQUÉ 13 March 2008
"Bringing together Somali civil society in the quest for peace"
Civil society meeting

PREAMBLE

From March 11-13, 2008, over 150 leaders of Somali civil society gathered at the Imperial Beach Resort Hotel in Entebbe, Uganda. The group included: Somali NGOs, business leaders, professional associations, women's groups, religious leaders, academics, the media, and traditional leaders. Almost half of the group are members of the Somali expatriate community, who travelled from as far afield as Australia, Canada and Scandinavia. It has been an unprecedented gathering of such a wide-ranging and influential group of civil society.

The prospect of recovery and peace-building in Somalia rests in large part on civil society, which can be a catalyst for social, political and economic change. The purpose of this meeting was two-fold: first, to foster a more collective voice among the diverse sectors and groups of Somali civil society, both those living within Somalia and those living outside; and second, to begin to build consensus among this group on how the Somali civil society can most effectively and constructively contribute to peace-building in Somalia.

Discussion was intense and animated over the three days of meetings, both in plenary session, and in the various working groups on, for instance, the role of women, the business community, and of the diaspora in peace-building. The meeting was also attended by selected representatives of the international community who had the opportunity to interact with the wide range of Somali participants.

SUMMARY OUTCOMES

The outputs of the conference have been documented and will be disseminated to all participants and interested parties shortly. Herewith is a summary of key outcomes:

1. The meeting provided an opportunity for the recently-established Non-State Actors platform for south-central Somalia to interact with other civil society groups. The establishment of the Somali South-Central Non-State Actors Association (SOSCENSA) represents the culmination of a 3-year process to develop a representative platform for Non-State Actors to dialogue with national and international decision-makers;

2. The participants discussed thoroughly the past Somali peace and reconciliation efforts as well as the current humanitarian crisis in Somalia - and in particular the massive displacement of civilians, looting of people and properties, and killings. The meeting calls on all parties in the conflict to enable humanitarian access for immediate emergency response by both Somali and international agencies;

3. The participants call for a practical commitment by the active sides in the current Somali context to a genuine and just reconciliation agreement. The participants urge all sectors of Somali society and the international community to support an all-inclusive and just outcome to achieve lasting peace and stability in Somalia;

4. The participants commit to redoubling their efforts in working for reconciliation towards sustainable peace in Somalia;

5. The representatives of the Somali business community in attendance agreed to establish a peace fund that will be made available to support local peace efforts;

6. The representatives of the Somali diaspora commit to an active partnership with the local civil society in the quest for peace and reconciliation, including fostering leadership with a new vision in the next generation;

7. The women representatives renew their commitment to advance peace and reconciliation through strengthening their own coordination and the connections with other sectors of civil society, the business sector, and diaspora.

The outcomes of the working groups on the role of civil society in peace building are as follows:

1. **In the current dynamics both at national and local levels, to:**
   - Generate pressure for peace
   - Mediate and build trust
   - Provide space and resources for dialogue
   - Monitor progress (for example, peace-watch)

2. **During the transition, to:**
   - Provide an advisory role and expertise on issues related to the constitution
   - Provide civic education to promote a culture of peace, citizenship (rights and responsibilities) and community participation in the transition
   - Generate pressure for transparency in representation and governance
   - Work to end the culture of impunity through the use of international justice mechanisms
   - Promote and support the establishment of institutions at local levels
   - Recognise and promote peace heroes

3. **Working together to:**
   - Enhance unity of vision
   - Strengthen coordination and identify focal points within the agreed structure
   - Pool resources for supporting reconciliation and consolidating peace
   - Support and promote existing structures – do not invent the wheel over and over again!

APPRECIATION

This unprecedented meeting of Somali civil society would not have been possible without the support and cooperation of the following:

The Government of Uganda, and in particular the President, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the Ugandan Ambassador Extraordinary Plenipotentiary for Somalia, Professor Sam Tulya-Muhika, and the Ugandan Special Envoy to Somalia, Ngoma Ngime. The fact that the President attended the meeting in person underlines his personal commitment to the quest for peace in Somalia.

The European Commission, Somalia Delegation. The EC has supported the process leading up to the dialogue meeting, as well as the Non-State Actors initiative, and provided the resources to enable the meeting to happen.

The Special Representative of the Secretary General for Somalia, Ahmedou Ould Abdallah, who gave his full backing for the meeting and sent his representative;

The Center for Research & Dialogue (CRD) based in Mogadishu, which was responsible for planning and coordinating the meeting.

Interpeace and **Saferworld**, international partners of CRD, who have supported and facilitated the dialogue meeting

And all **the participants** who gave their time and commitment to attend and make this event possible